Excavations at Caerwent Monmouthshire

on the Site of the

Romano-British City of Venta Silurum

in the year 1908

Communicated to the Society of Antiquaries by

Thomas Ashby, Esq., D.Litt., F.S.A.

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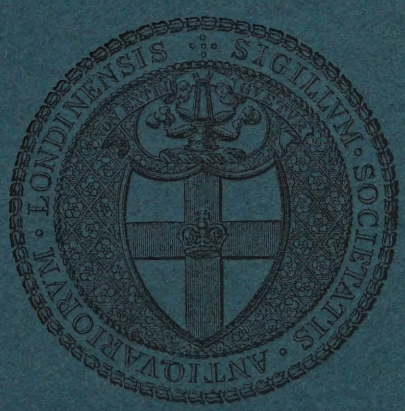

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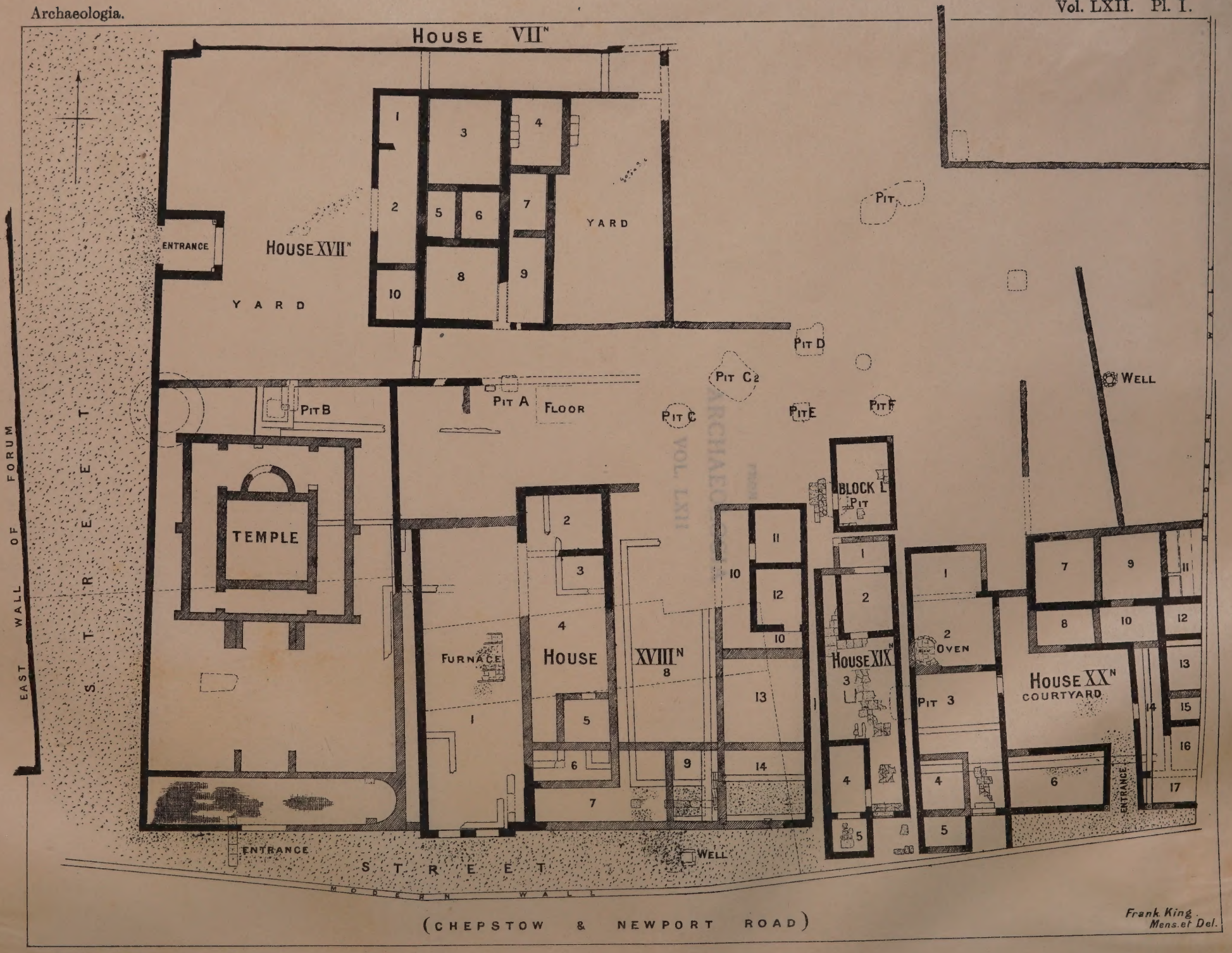
FROM

ARCHAEOLOGIA

VOL. LXII

GARDEN TROWEL & WATERING CAN

GOVERNMENT PLAN OF TEMPLE AND HOUSES XVII^a XVIII^a XIX^a AND XX^a



C.F KELL & SON, PHOTO-LITHO WESTMINSTER

CAERWENT. PLAN OF TEMPLE AND HOUSES XVII,^N XVIII,^N XIX^N AND XX.^N

ARCHAEOLOGIA

OR

MISCELLANEOUS TRACTS

ETC.

I.—*Excavations at Caerwent, Monmouthshire, on the Site of the Romano-British City of Venta Silurum, in the year 1908.* *By* THOMAS ASHBY, *Esq., D.Litt., F.S.A.*, ALFRED E. HUDD, *Esq., F.S.A., and* FRANK KING, *Esq.*

Read 14th January, 1909.

THE excavations of 1908 began on 15th June, and were continued until 6th November, under the direction of Messrs. Ashby, Hudd, and Jones, assisted by Mr. F. King as architect.

They were entirely carried out in the orchard and gardens which now occupy the *insula* to the east of the forum, immediately to the north of the high road. House no. VII N, which was excavated in 1906,[1] occupies the northern portion of this *insula*.

The site was very largely made ground, and had been previously occupied by a number of pits.

HOUSE no. XVII N.

To the south of House no. VII N lies a small house, which we have called House no. XVII N. Its plan (plate I) closely resembles that of House no. III N,[2] consisting like it of a range of rooms running north and south, with a narrower range on each side of them; Room 4, at the north end of the east range, being somewhat wider than the rest.

The house had been a good deal destroyed both in ancient and modern times, some of the walls having been dug out for building material. On the west side of Room 3 were strong traces of burning. Here, on a mass of *débris* and blackened earth, lay fragments of two sandstone slabs, $1\frac{5}{8}$ inch thick, and measuring altogether about 2 feet 6 inches by 1 foot 10 inches. In Room 4 lay a similar fragment, also

[1] See *Archaeologia*, lx. 451.

[2] *Archaeologia*, lix. pl. xi.

on *débris*, and of about the same size as the other two together. The floors have in some places disappeared.

Room 3 has its walls preserved on all four sides above the level of the concrete floor, and of the slabs in Room 4 and to the east of it. It is not certain where the entrance was, whether it was by steps, or in the south-west corner of the room, from Room 5.

In the south-west angle of Room 2 a small portion of white plaster was still *in situ* on the wall, and in working along the wall between Rooms 1 and 3 a considerable amount of ordinary black pottery was found. Along the wall between Rooms 3 and 4 a weaver's bone comb was discovered, and adjoining the west wall of Room 4 were fixed four sandstone slabs each about 7 inches thick and 2 feet 1 inch square. A similar line of slabs was found outside the east wall of this room (see plan, plate I). In both cases, no doubt, the slabs were used as steps forming the entrance to Room 4 from the east and from Room 4 into Room 3; only in the latter case there must have been another step up, as the west wall of Room 4 was preserved to a height of 1 foot above the slabs.

Near the east wall of Room 4 a piece of the bottom of a Samian bowl with a circular floral stamp was found, and with it coins of Constantine. I and Valens. This only goes to show, what has already been noticed at Caerwent, that owing to the site having been continually inhabited, and ransacked for building material, the chronological order of the strata has been much disturbed, and that the chronology is only certain where pottery is found under floors. This was also the case in Room 8, where 2 feet down a coin of Claudius Gothicus was found, with a piece of second-century Samian. Coins are apt to work their way downwards, worms assisting their progress. At 2 feet 6 inches below grass level on the north side of Room 8, and 3 feet below on the south side, was a concrete floor with fragments of plaster in it, and a burnt layer on top. Below this floor, and 4 feet below grass level, a piece of second-century Samian was found.

The small rooms 5 and 6 occupy the middle of the house.

On the west side of Room 5 there was plain white plaster *in situ* to a height of 2 feet above the floor level. The plaster was $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, and finished with a quarter-round moulding as skirting on the floor. The floor was of concrete, rather perished, and some 4 to 6 inches below the threshold stone of the room. A small brass of Trebonianus Gallus (A.D. 251–254) was found on this floor. Between Rooms 5 and 6 the wall is broken away for about 3 feet, and there may have been a doorway here. These two rooms were accessible from one another, and Room 5 could be entered from Room 3, but neither had any well-defined entrance southward into Room 8. There was no access westward into Room 2; indeed, the western range of rooms, nos. 1, 2, and 10, seems to have been shut off from the rest of the house.

Room 2 was entered directly from the yard, and Rooms 1 and 10 from Room 2. Room 7 was probably entered from Room 4, and Room 9 from Room 7. Whether Rooms 7 and 9 had any entrance from the east, and whether Room 9 led into Room 8, must be treated as doubtful.

In Room 9 a fragment of a Kimmeridge shale disk and some brightly coloured (pink, green, and yellow) plaster were found.

To the east of the house is a yard with rough pitching about 1 foot 6 inches below grass level. The yard is surrounded by walls on all sides, and was probably entered from the east. Its north wall has two cross walls connecting it with House no. VII N. The foundation of another wall was found running north from the north-west angle of Room 3. There is also a yard on the west of the house, roughly pitched, and bounded on the west by the wall which follows the eastern edge of the street.

The northern portion of the wall is shown in the plan of House no. VII N, already published in *Archaeologia*,[1] and there wrongly attributed to the latest period of the house. As a matter of fact it has been since ascertained that the portion running eastward (and therefore the whole wall) is earlier, and not later, than the south wall of Room 20 of House no. VII N. This portion of the wall originally ran right up to the south-west angle of the earliest building of House no. VII N and was broken away when it was extended westwards. This explains the facts (1) that it forms a right angle with the west wall of the first date of this house, and (2) that instead of joining House no. VII N at the south-west angle of the building of the third date it runs on a little further east and is then broken away.

The yard west of House no. XVII N is entered from the street by a gateway 9 feet 3 inches wide; this leads into a space 12 feet 6 inches square with another gateway on the east. The socket hole for one of the gates is still preserved in the stone on the north side of the east gateway.

No doubt here, as probably at the entrance to the forum, there was a porch. Red and yellow plaster fragments were found here.

On the south the yard is closed by the boundary wall of the temple (see below), and on the east by House no. XVII N itself. The space between House no. XVII N and the temple boundary wall prolonged eastward is closed, opposite the south-west angle of Room 8, by a short piece of wall and a doorway. The threshold stones of the door are still preserved *in situ*. It is, however, doubtful if one of these blocks originally served as a threshold stone; the groove in it may have supported another block placed endwise.

[1] Vol. lx. plate xlii.

The Temple

The building to the south of House no. XVII N, occupying the ground between the latter and the high road, was next excavated, and proved to be one of the most important and interesting structures yet found at Caerwent. There can be no doubt that it is the remains of a Roman temple, and although the building has been destroyed nearly throughout to below floor level, and has been used as a stone quarry by the builders of the houses and garden walls in the neighbourhood, enough remains to enable the ground-plan to be restored fairly completely.

Fig. 1. The Temple, from the south-east.

It greatly resembles the temple found in the beginning of the last century by the Hon. and Rev. W. H. Bathurst, and all too briefly described by him in his *Roman Antiquities of Lydney Park, Gloucestershire*.[1] The ground-plan of this Lydney temple, as given by Mr. Bathurst (plate iv c), is very like ours at Caerwent, but the latter is much smaller. The Lydney building measured about 93 feet by 73 feet, and the *cella* about 60 feet by 30 feet.

The Caerwent temple consists of a rectangular *cella*, 20 feet by 19 feet 6 inches, with an apse in the middle of the north side (fig. 1). There are pilasters at the north and south ends of the east and west walls, which balance the pilasters

[1] London, 1879.

in the surrounding wall of the *podium*. This wall has buttresses at the ends of the north and south sides and in the middle of the east and west sides, and is sufficiently far away from the walls of the *cella* to leave plenty of space for an ambulatory completely round it (see plan, plate I). Running south from the south side of the *podium* are two short walls symmetrically placed, and forming the sides of the entrance to the temple across an open space[1] from a room with a tessellated floor which occupies the whole of the south front of the temple area.

This is bounded on the south by the high road; on the west by the road running north and south to the east of the forum; on the north by the yard of House no. XVII N, and on the east by the building we have called House no. XVIII N. The enclosed temple area measures 110 feet from north to south, and 63 feet from east to west.

All the walls of the temple are massive and well built.

The *cella* and its *podium* occupy the northern portion of the temple area, but are not placed quite symmetrically in it, the outside boundary walls not running parallel with the walls of the *podium* (see plan). This is probably due to the fact that the former in part belong to an earlier period (see below).

Careful examination of the interiors of the *cella* and the *podium* has not yielded much except miscellaneous *débris*, as though they had been purposely filled up to form a floor level which has almost entirely disappeared, except on the south side of the *podium*. The natural bottom was reached 5 feet below the grass level, and the walls ran down to this depth to ensure proper stability A few old red sandstone *tesserae* were found in the *cella* and its apse, close to the surface of the ground, and lower down in the apse a few pieces of window glass and of coloured plaster, red, white, and yellow. At 5 feet down a coin of Victorinus and one of Gallienus were found; also a silver one of Alexander Severus.

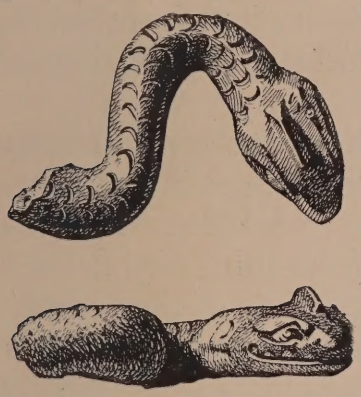


Fig. 2. Bronze serpent-head ornament found in the Temple. ½.

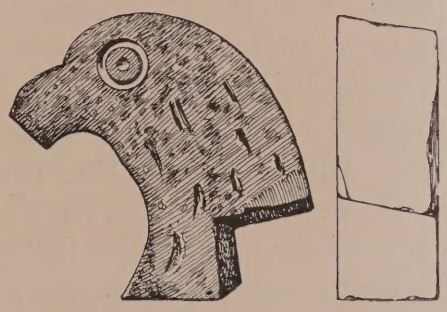


Fig. 3. Bird's head of carved bone found in the Temple. ½.

To the east of the *cella* a small bronze serpent-head ornament, about 2½ inches long (fig. 2), was found 3 feet below grass level; also buried in front of the apse a dog's skull, and a bird's head in carved and polished bone (fig. 3).[2]

[1] A later pit, roughly rectangular, and 6 feet in depth, has been formed in mediaeval or modern times on the west side of this space.

[2] These relics are not conclusive, but like the Lydney temple this one may have been dedicated

In the space between the south wall of the *cella* and the south wall of the *podium*, and in a line with the entrance, a cement flooring resting on a concrete foundation was found on a level with the tessellated floor of the entrance hall (see below). This is the only part of the pavement of the *podium* which is preserved.

The long room which occupies the south front of the temple area has an apse at its east end, and is paved with old red sandstone *tesserae*, roughly laid. Only one side of the entrance from the street to this room was preserved, and three large blocks of sandstone were still *in situ* outside at the road level, and one inside on a level with the floor. These no doubt formed part of an architectural feature at the doorway of this important building.

There are a few traces of earlier walls within the area of the temple, which are perhaps contemporary with the external boundary walls of the temple area on the north and west. These walls are very low down, only one or two courses being preserved, and surrounded a pit which we have called Pit B.

Over the east wall and partly over the pit there was found a hearth made of sandstone blocks. Below this hearth, 4 feet down, was found some Samian pottery, one a straight-sided bowl (Dragendorff 30),[1] and pottery was found almost all the way down. The bottom of the pit was reached 13 feet below grass level, and 9 feet 6 inches from the top of the walls surrounding the pit. To the west of the pit was pitching at a very low level round the foundations, and between the wall bounding the pit on the south and the north wall of the *podium* was a mass of masonry, filling up the space between the walls. Both these features are probably to be attributed to the instability of the ground, and may be considered as precautionary measures.

Running east from near the middle of the east wall of the *cella* is another early foundation which runs under the east wall of the *podium* and the east boundary wall into the line of the north wall of Room 1 of House no. XVIII N. It looks as if the east boundary wall for some distance southwards from this point is built on a wider and earlier foundation. It also appears that the whole of the temple, as it at present stands, is of a later date than these early walls running east under

to a health deity, possibly Aesculapius, or Hygeia. The serpent's head is too heavy to have formed part of a bracelet or brooch, and it has been suggested that it may have been part of a statuette of Hygeia, who was sometimes represented with a serpent twined around her body. A stone effigy of the Romano British period, with remains of a serpent coiled round the bust, was found some years ago a few miles east of Caerwent, but has not yet been described or illustrated. The Caerwent serpent differs from any other known to me from Roman times in having a distinct triangular crest on the top of its head. [A. E. H.]

[1] The elements of decoration are as follows: In the first vertical division Déchelette 34 (seahorse to right), under it a garland; under this D. 969 (quadruped, hare?, to left). In the second vertical division a medallion with a scene; under it D. 1035, 1009 (bird to left and bird to right). The pattern is then repeated: the seahorse apparently recurs (to left) and under it is D. 927 (dog to right).

its eastern boundary wall. The fragments of walls between the temple and House no. XVIII N may belong to this early building, or to another house of the same date.

There were remains of some later constructions belonging to post-Roman times at the north-west angle of the temple area. Here over the north-west corner and partly over the Roman street was found a circular building 11 feet in diameter, with walls 3 feet 6 inches thick. A portion of the slab floor was still *in situ*, well above the level of the Roman street. On pulling down the portion of the circular wall over the north-west angle of the *podium* the buttress was discovered, and several of the sandstone blocks which had formed part of the buttress had been used to build the wall of the circular building. On clearing out the chamber a few bones of pig, fish, and chicken were found. The structure is no doubt post-Roman, and may have been the foundation for a circular stone culverhouse similar to several of mediaeval date which still remain in the West of England and South Wales; or it may have been a pigeon-house belonging to Caerwent House, which was, a century since, the Caerwent Inn, a posting-house on the London road where several coaches stopped each day on their way through.

Just south of this round building a considerable quantity of dark red quarter-round skirting and other coloured plaster was found, 3 feet below grass level. It is uncertain to which of the walls this plaster belonged. Just here the west wall of the *podium* has been reconstructed in quite modern times, and the apse had been partly destroyed by the insertion of a modern saw-pit. We have removed the pit and roughly repaired the apse, it having been decided by Viscount Tredegar to leave the whole of this interesting building permanently open.

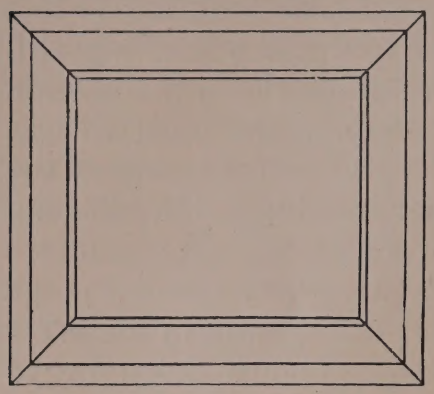
The street west of House no. XVII N and the temple area increases considerably in width as it goes northward; it is 24 feet 6 inches in width where it joins the main east and west road, and 36 feet 2 inches wide opposite the entrance into House no. XVII N.

House no. XVIII N

House no. XVIII N occupies the site just east of the temple area. Originally it seems to have consisted of three distinct buildings, probably shops, having a frontage line on the street, as shown by the early walls running through Rooms 7, 9, and 14 on the plan, and contemporary with the line of large flat kerbstones and street layer found in those rooms.

Whether at this stage any building adjoined the temple area it is difficult to say, but there are traces of an ancient building as shown by the early walls just inside the entrance from the street, and also by the foundations of walls passing under the east wall of the temple area. The second stage of the buildings on this site seems to have been where the middle and eastern blocks were extended

over the footpath and street. This extension is shown by the early walls under the later front wall and over the slab kerbing and bases, which will be described later. The last stage was when the several buildings were combined into one large house, and the long wall bordering the street with another to the north, which formed the north side of Rooms 6, 9, and 14, were built.



We will begin with the first stage, of which not much remains. The flat kerbstones in Rooms 7 and 9 are very similar to those found on the village green in 1903.[1] The drain running north at the east end of these slabs is curious. Originally it must have served the purpose of draining the narrow space between Rooms 8 and 13, *i.e.* the space between the two buildings which would have had a considerable amount of rain water falling into it.

The early wall through Room 14, forming the south-eastern angle of the block, has a curious rebate at its western end, as if it had been intended to receive the wooden frame for a shop front.

Under the south-eastern and south-western angles of this room, and in the middle of the south wall, were found three large sandstone bases 1 foot 6 inches high and 1 foot 3 inches by 1 foot 6 inches on the top (Fig. 4); the eastern one is under the south-east corner of Room 14 and cannot be shown. These bases stood on other rough sandstone blocks, which in turn were on a rough stone foundation.

Fig. 4. Plan ($\frac{1}{12}$) and section ($\frac{1}{4}$) of one of three bases from the first stage of the eastern portion of House no. XVIII N.

The middle base was best preserved and has been removed to the Museum, but it was found impossible to get out the lower blocks owing to their being so soft from damp and age. These bases can only have carried a porch or awning in front of the shop; there was plenty of room for foot passengers to pass between them and the shop front.[2]

The remains of the second stage of House no. XVIIIN are more scanty than those of the first stage. All that we can identify with certainty are the walls in outline under the front wall and the wide wall running north and south in Room 9.

[1] *Archaeologia*, lix. 117 and pl. xi.

[2] On the wall south of the eastern courtyard of the house was found a gold coin of Elagabalus Cohen, 2nd Ed. no. 194) in good condition. This is the first gold coin we have found at Caerwent.

The whole of this building had been much destroyed owing to the erection of a malt-house on the site, all the stone required to build the malt-house being taken from the Roman walls underneath. The northern portion of the building suffered most in this respect.

The space numbered 1 simply consists of the entrance, which had a double doorway projecting 1 foot 6 inches in front of the general line of frontage to the street, the doors being 5 feet 6 inches wide. Just inside these doors was found a layer of rough stones very firmly packed and supporting a concrete floor on a level with the street surface. On the east side, 3 feet down, was found a fragment of figured Samian pottery (Dragendorff 37) with reversed stamp MANNIO (*Cinnami*).

In the middle of this large space and inside the malt-house were two curiously shaped furnaces, consisting of two parallel rows of sandstone slabs, placed on end and paved with similar slabs, the whole showing considerable traces of burning.

To the south-west of these furnaces was a hard-rammed gravel floor. In the north-west angle of this area (Room 1) was a pit or rubbish-hole, 7 feet deep, containing only broken pottery.

Further to the south the west face of the west wall of this room was composed of long ashlar blocks in the lower part and of smaller stones in the upper part, and between the two was a continuous groove 6 inches high and 3 inches deep, the purpose of which is uncertain. On the east side there was no such difference in the face, which was uniform throughout.

Room 2 had a concrete floor about 6 inches thick and 1 foot 6 inches below the grass level, upon which was a coin of Antoninus Pius. About 8 inches below the floor is a layer of rough stones and a bedding of mortar. Below this concrete floor two earlier walls of different periods were found, running north and south in the western portion of the room. There do not seem to be any traces of a floor in connexion with either of them, and they may have been simply boundary walls to a pit to the east.

Under the concrete floor to the west of the uppermost, *i.e.* the westernmost, of these cross walls was found the blade of an iron billhook with traces of the wooden shaft in the socket; also on both sides of the cross wall some pieces of Samian (Dragendorff 37) and a piece of a bowl like Dragendorff 32, but with the lip less pronounced (a common type here). Fragments from one side of this earlier wall fitted one from the other side. Further to the east the floor had given considerably, the room having apparently been built over the site of a pit. A large quantity of pottery, including a comparatively small amount of figured Samian ware, was found in this pit. About 4 feet down, just under the large stones serving as a foundation to the floor, which had sunk here, two black pear-shaped pots of

Upchurch ware, with scored intersecting lines forming lattice patterns (one of the commonest forms at Caerwent), were found, one broken lying sideways, the other entire standing straight up. At 6 feet down was found a coin of Constantine Junior, in fairly good condition, and near it, besides some Samian ware, including one small piece of Dragendorff 29, and several of Dragendorff 37, was a piece of a thin green glazed bowl with finely ribbed sides. At 8 feet 6 inches below the grass level the dish-shaped bottom was reached, formed of hard red clay.

To the south of Room 2 was a passage on the west, with no floor preserved, and on the east the small square room 3, with a concrete floor 3 feet below grass level. To the south of it again was Room 4, also with a concrete floor at the same level, with considerable traces of burning upon it. This room extended right across the malt-house, and is bounded on the south by the small room 5, with another short passage as on the north. Within the area of the malt-house some fine figured Samian was found, from 1 foot to 2 feet 6 inches below the modern level, close to the foundations of the wall.

Room 5 was approached by a doorway from Room 4, but no trace could be found of any doorway into Room 6, or from Room 6 into Room 7.

Between the early and later walls in Room 6, on the east side of the room, was found the upper portion of a large amphora upside down and broken into a great number of pieces, and a little lower down a fine bronze brooch.

The space, Room 8 on plan, most probably served as a courtyard in the last stage of the building. In the north-west angle were found, at 2 feet 6 inches down, fragments of black pear-shaped pots (two whole, or nearly so), and 3 feet 6 inches down a perfect black pear-shaped pot lying on its side at the level of the foundation of the wall.

No trace of doorways could be found in Rooms 9, 13, or 14.

The northern angle is broken away by a later wall crossing it at an angle, and by a modern slab-covered drain from the malt-house pit.

The east wing of the building was much better preserved. In the northern portion there was a corridor, 10 on plan, which turned east at its southern end. From the corridor Rooms 11 and 12 were entered, Room 11 on the west side and Room 12 on the south. Both these rooms had good concrete floors. On the threshold of Room 12 were found five coins and a piece of a figured Samian bowl (Dragendorff 37) with a tree upon it not corresponding with any of those figured by Déchelette. Of the coins two were much worn and burnt first brasses (possibly Vespasian and Hadrian), one a second brass (illegible), a silver denarius of Vespasian and one of Hadrian.

Under the concrete floor of the corridor south of Room 12 were found a mussel shell, a piece of Samian cup with ivy leaves on the edge (Dragendorff 35),

and a piece of a figured bowl (Dragendorff 37) with medallion and the figure of a cock (Déchelette 1009). The west wall of the corridor 10 had nearly all been destroyed.

Very few finds were made in the southern portion of this wing. Over the two walls west of Room 13, the half of a very large lower stone of a quern was found. The stone was conglomerate, and measured 2 feet 5 inches in diameter. In the room, and against the west wall, was a perfect lower quern stone and a quantity of fragments of bright yellow plaster on a level with the early foundation. Between the west wall of Room 13 and the early east wall of Room 8 a large quantity of broken pottery and a few bone pins were found. Just south of the north wall of Room 14 the cap of a small column came to light (fig. 5).

Fig. 5. Capital of column from eastern portion of House no. XVIII N. ¼.

House no. XIX N

In the narrow space of ground between House no. XVIII N and House no. XIX N a considerable amount of pottery was found at various depths, from 1 foot below grass to 5 feet down. The same remark applies to the space between House no. XIX N and House no. XX N. The pottery lay between the foundations, and was probably part of the rubbish thrown in to cover them. At 4 feet below grass two slabs of old red sandstone on edge were found.

House no. XIX N consists of a long range of five rooms, having a frontage of 21 feet 6 inches to the street.

Rooms 1 and 2 do not occupy the full width of the building, and appear to be of later formation, Room 1 being added to, and Room 2 cut out of Room 3. The

walls of Room 1 are not bonded into the main house wall, and the west and south walls of Room 2 are not bonded into the outside walls.

In the north-east corner of Room 1 two perfect pots were found, standing in the corner and covered with a sandstone slab; one was a small reddish-yellow bottle $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, the other a larger black pear-shaped pot $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches high,

Fig. 6. Wall between Houses nos. XIX and XX N showing sinkage over an ancient pit.

with scored lattice pattern of Upchurch ware. The top of the black pot was level with the floor. A doorway, well marked on the east side, leads from Room 1 into Room 2.

In Room 2 six coins of Victorinus, Constantine, Valens, and Gratian were found together on the floor level, which is shown by the doorway into Room 3 and the slab paving of the latter. Here also was found a piece of bright blue frit for use on enamelled metal work.

[1] Similar frit has been found at Caerwent previously, which seems to indicate that the beautiful enamelled objects found on the site were probably made there.

The narrow space between Room 2 and the west wall of the house was paved with large slabs of old red sandstone, 1½ inch thick, and 3 feet below grass level. This space or passage formed a part of Room 3 before Room 2 was cut out. Probably the whole floor of the house, except Room 4, from the street to the north wall between Rooms 1 and 2, was originally a paved courtyard, Room 5 being built over the street later.

In the middle of Room 3 was a fireplace formed of slabs set up on end, and against the south wall was another furnace of larger blocks, all much burnt.

In the east wall of the room were considerable signs of subsidence (Fig. 6), clearly showing that the wall had been built over a pit and that a considerable part of the building stands on made ground. The bottom of the pit was reached on each side of the wall, 9 feet down.

About one thousand small coins were found in Room 3; they extended all over its area, but were especially numerous in the north-east part of the room near the wall. Some iron objects were also found. This small hoard consists almost entirely of minims, chiefly of Valentinian II., Theodosius and his two sons, those of Arcadius being, as usual at Caerwent, much more numerous than those of Honorius. There were also a few of Gallienus, Tetricus, Constantine I. and his family, Maximus, Victor, and one of Eugenius, mostly showing considerable wear. We may therefore date the deposit of the hoard to the first half of the fifth century A.D. Some of the coins and the whole of the room showed considerable traces of burning.

Room 4 was reached from Room 3 near the main entrance from the street. On the west wall of Room 4 some pinkish-brown plaster still remained.

Room 5 was reached from Room 4, and was paved with large sandstone blocks, about 2 feet 6 inches below grass level. A foot below these blocks was a rubble and concrete floor, probably the street, over which it was extended, and the bottom was reached 3 feet 6 inches lower. Room 5 was added later, as the straight joint at its north-west and north-east corners shows.

The main entrance to the house from the street was through a small space paved with slabs and a large doorway 5 feet wide into Room 3. The threshold stone was a 6-inch step above the slab paving of the room.

Block L N.

This is an oblong building consisting of a single room to the north of House no. XIX N and separated from it by a narrow space only 1 foot in width, but it does not appear to have ever formed part of the house.

The room was paved with old red sandstone flags and has a yellow sandstone threshold *in situ* on the west side, opening upon an area also paved with old red sandstone flags. The flags outside the building had, however, sunk, and inspection revealed a round pit underneath them, which contained a considerable quantity of ordinary pottery fragments. The bottom of the pit was reached 10 feet below grass level. Under the paving a fragment of the bottom of a riveted Samian pot (Dragendorff 31) with the stamp CARVSSA was found.

Inside the block a lower millstone and half an upper one were found, and some red and yellow wall plaster. Just outside the east wall was a dark grey pear-shaped pot found standing upright, 1 foot 2 inches below the grass level. The pot was covered with an old red sandstone slab and contained the bones of a child.

To the north of Block L N were found rubbish pits, D, E, E 2, and F on plan.

Pit D at the end of the south boundary wall of the east yard of House no. XVII N contained various kinds of pottery from 3 feet down; at 6 feet 3 inches a well-preserved cream-coloured jug was found $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches high, with one handle and a bulging body tapering to the foot, and at 6 feet 6 inches an amphora with the mouth downwards. The bottom half was gone and the neck broken off; on the side were scratched the letters $\frac{\text{VII}}{\text{ADG}}$.

At 8 feet down besides pottery a well-preserved horse's skull and a skull of *bos longifrons* were found. The ox had evidently been poleaxed. The bottom of the pit of solid clay was reached at 9 feet 9 inches below grass level. Pit E, south of Pit D, was only 5 feet 9 inches deep, and nothing of note was found. Pit E 2 was 6 feet 6 inches deep, and contained nothing worth noting. Pit F just north of Block L N contained a pear-shaped pot with a handle and the fragments of a glass bowl; the bottom was reached at 6 feet 6 inches below grass level.

What original purpose the space north of House no. XVIII N served cannot be said: it may have been a garden.

The whole of the space had been much disturbed. A portion of the foundation of the early wall just north of the *podium* of the temple could be traced, but only the south side of it. At the end of the continuation of the north wall of the temple area eastwards Pit A was discovered. The wall was roughly broken off, so that the construction of the pit may explain the wall ending so abruptly. In the pit a coin of Tetricus was found at about 5 feet below grass level, and some Samian pottery at about 6 feet down. One piece, the bottom of a cup (Dragendorff 33), had the stamp CELSIANI · F on it. The bottom of the pit was reached 13 feet below grass level.

Nothing more was found until at 11 feet from grass level a small sandstone statuette of a goddess (fig. 8) seated in an arm-chair came to light. The type

of face is not unlike that of the head found in 1902,[1] though the face is somewhat flatter.

Just east of Pit A was a concrete floor 3 feet 9 inches below grass level, and off it came a coin of Constantine Junior. To the north-east of this floor an enamelled bronze stand was found.[2] East of the floor a deep pit, marked C on plan, was also discovered, and some interesting finds were made. At 5 feet 6 inches below grass level a coin of Victorinus and some pottery were discovered, and at 8 feet down a bronze brooch and a good deal of Samian ware. From 8 feet to 12 feet a bowl (Dragendorff 37) with Déchelette 219 (dancing girl) combined with

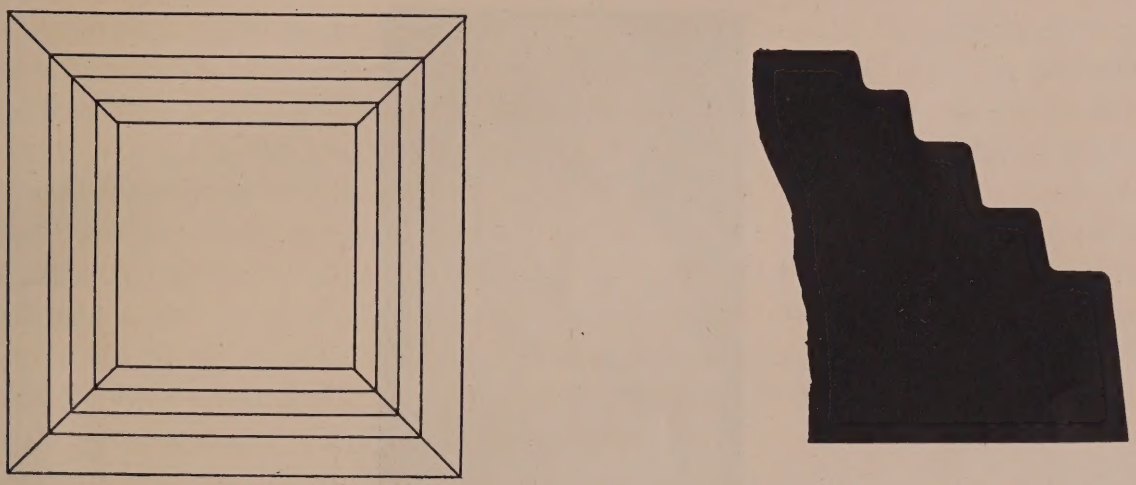


Fig. 7. Plan ($\frac{1}{12}$) and section ($\frac{1}{4}$) of small base from Pit C, north of House no. XVIII N.

191 (Venus and Adonis?). Part of the top stone of a quern was found at 11 feet down, and the other half at 12 feet. Samples of the mud were taken at 12 feet and 13 feet below grass level and sent to Mr. Lyell, who detected in them a considerable number of seeds.[3] At 16 feet 3 inches down part of a large grey pear-shaped pot was found, and at 16 feet 6 inches a small base 8 inches in thickness (fig. 7).

From 18 feet to 20 feet down were found a piece of lead pipe, and some wood and rope, the latter continuing as far as 22 feet. Between 20 feet and 22 feet a fragment of a bowl (Dragendorff 37) with Cupid to right (Déchelette 236) was found. The bottom 2 feet 6 inches in diameter, in the hard clay, was reached at

[1] *Archaeologia*, lviii. 150.

[2] It is similar to one figured in the Catalogue of the Guildhall Museum, London, plate xiv. 65, and to one found in the south-west digging at Caerwent. Examples have also been found at Silchester.

[3] These have been examined and identified by Mr. Clement Reid, whose report is given below.

22 feet 9 inches below grass level. The pit had apparently been sunk for a well, but never used as such.

A spring was found in the side of the pit, about 15 feet below grass level, where the diameter was 3 feet 5 inches. The spring was very slight, and quite insufficient for a well supply. The pit was therefore never excavated to a diameter sufficient to allow of the insertion of the stone lining.

Pit C 2 to the north-east of Pit C was a large irregular opening. About 1 foot down, on the top, a coin of Tetricus was found; and from 4 feet to 7 feet down some pottery. At 9 feet down a perfect brooch with some more pottery.

Fig. 8. Sandstone figure of a seated goddess.

The sculptured head of a god found in the south diggings, the seated goddess (fig. 8) found in 1908, and a small "domestic" altar found in 1909, are all carved from local yellow sandstone, and are no doubt of local manufacture. The distinguished French antiquary, M. Espérandieu, to whom photographs of these Caerwent images were forwarded, writes of the goddess: "C'est de l'art indigène, si toutefois il est permis de parler d'art lorsqu'il s'agit de choses qui en sont totalement dépourvues. Les diverses régions de la Gaule Celtique nous ont fourni un grand nombre de monuments figurés, dont l'analogie avec celui de Venta Silurum ne me paraît pas contestable." M. Espérandieu also forwarded some illustrations of various Gallo-Roman sculptures from his great work *Recueil général des bas-reliefs de la Gaule romaine*, some of which are similar to our Caerwent deities. It may be mentioned that in the Musée Carnavalet, in Paris, there

is a stone torso of a man or god, with a square hole at the neck, into which the head, now missing, fitted, it being carved out of a different stone; no doubt our Caerwent god was similarly constructed, and the head was only spared because it was of no use to the lime-burners who destroyed the limestone body.

House no. XX N.

The eastern portion of this block has not yet been excavated, and it is not certain whether all these rooms belong to one house or not. It may be taken as one house with a courtyard in the middle or as two houses having a common courtyard. In the space between Houses nos. XIX N and XX N a quantity of pottery was found, and a coin of Carausius.

Both wings seem to have had access to the courtyard, but only the western block, so far as we know at present, had direct access to the street. Both wings of the building show considerable signs of alteration.

The west wing consists of six rooms arranged somewhat like those of House no. XIX N. In the northern part of the wing the walls had been much destroyed, and nothing was found worth recording.

In the south-west angle of Room 2 a curious circular oven or kiln was discovered. It is 6 feet in diameter, and seems to have opened from the east. The kiln was constructed of sandstone blocks and very regularly paved with sandstone slabs. On the south side the blocks forming the wall distinctly show that the inside was domed or of beehive shape. The whole of the kiln has been very much burnt, and as the floor was only a few inches below the turf nothing remained to show for what purpose it had been used. It may have been a domestic oven.

Room 3 had an entrance direct into the courtyard to the east over a threshold 5 feet wide. A small rubbish pit was found just north of the earlier wall which crosses the room from east to west. The whole of the area of this room was evidently made up with rubbish to bring it to the general level. The southern part of Room 3 had direct access to the street through a porch similar to the arrangement in House no. XIX. The paved floor level, which partly covered one of the early walls, was two steps below the level of the threshold stone. Under this slab floor a considerable amount of pottery was discovered. The best piece was a large portion of a plain Samian pot. Bottom was reached some 5 feet 6 inches down. A perfect quern was found along the east wall of Room 3.

Rooms 4 and 5 are similar in plan to Rooms 4 and 5 in House no. XIX N;

Room 5, here also, being an addition at some later time. The bottom in this Room 5 was reached well below the foundations of the wall, and the filling contained pottery fragments right down to the bottom.

Room 6 forms the south boundary of the courtyard and appears to have been entered from it only, no trace of a doorway into Room 4 having been found. On the north side of Room 6 a coin of Maximianus was found, and just above the early foundation the lower jaw of a human skull, 3 feet 6 inches below grass level. On each side of the early foundation traces of pitching were found, that on the south being of the same structure as street material, which it most probably was. The east wall of Room 6 forms the west wall of the entrance to the courtyard from the street. Built into the south-east corner of the room was a block of sandstone with a hole 9 inches square and 3 inches deep in it, seeming to mark the place where the doorpost stood. On pulling down the later south-west corner of Room 17, on the east side of the entrance passage, a somewhat similar stone was found, with a hole 7 inches square and 3 inches deep. This must have been the eastern side of the original gateway. At a later time the entrance had been reduced in width by the construction of the later west wall of Room 17, which also formed the eastern boundary of the courtyard.

The gateway between Rooms 6 and 17 was paved with hard-rammed gravel and stones, extending right over the early wall, and on a level with the street paving outside.

On the west side of the courtyard, 3 feet down, a good second brass of Hadrian was found. The paving of the courtyard was the same as in the gateway, but on the north side another level was traceable underneath; the bottom was reached 5 feet 9 inches down, and pottery was found all through the filling. There seems to have been a way through the courtyard to the back of the house between Rooms 2 and 8; the passage way has a wall across it, but the wall is only one course deep and roughly built.

Of the east wing, or block, of the house practically only the walls remain, and very few finds were made.

The rooms 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 in the north portion all had concrete floors preserved, that in Rooms 9 and 11 being especially good brick cement. The only possible trace of a doorway was from Room 9 to Room 10. The west wall of Room 11 was built over the concrete floor, and its south wall still had white plaster *in situ*. The concrete floor in Room 11 had a wide trench in it, as if at some time a wall had stood there and been pulled out. On the east side of the trench with its face against the concrete a considerable quantity of white plaster was found.

The wall between Rooms 12 and 13 had a later wall built partly on the north side of it. The later work was only one course deep on a rough foundation.

Rooms 13 and 15 had very little in them, and it was impossible to trace their eastern limits as here we had come to the boundary of Lord Tredegar's property.

Room 14, a corridor, had a doorway into the courtyard, and the early courtyard wall was found running right through it. At 5 feet 4 inches down a mussel shell and fragments of Samian pottery and yellow plaster were found.

The walls of Rooms 16 and 17 had been destroyed, a modern rubbish pit being found here.

The ground north of House No. XX was thoroughly trenched but very little was found. Two rough boundary walls run northwards from the east wing of the house, and on the east side of the easternmost a small well was discovered. The diameter was 2 feet on the top and the masonry started about 1 foot 6 inches from grass level. Water was reached at 14 feet down, and some bones and black unglazed red pottery came from this level. At 15 feet down was a perfect black pear-shaped pot, slightly cracked. The pot must have been thrown into the water or else it would have been smashed to pieces. Some more pottery fragments and a jaw-bone of an ox were found. The bottom was reached at 16 feet 6 inches from grass level, and a sample of the mud was taken, in which Mr. Lyell found seeds of several plants, identified later by Mr. Clement Reid, who gives a list of between fifty and sixty plants, chiefly from Pit C, and reports as follows:—

> This is the usual flora of Roman Britain, with the same group of cultivated plants and weeds of cultivation as is found in other excavations, and the same singular absence of some of our most common species. A few of the plants have not been recorded before.
>
> The opium-poppy is a new discovery at Caerwent, though it has been found on several occasions in Roman Silchester; its seeds were scattered on bread. The greater celandine is a plant only found in the neighbourhood of houses, and was formerly in use for curing warts; it is not improbable that it was used for medicinal purposes in Roman Britain; it has been found at Silchester also. The cultivated pea is rare on Roman sites. Seeds of coriander and dill were in common use in Rome as condiments or spices. Alexanders is a pot-herb only found near villages: it is a new record for Roman Britain. The deadly nightshade, or belladonna, was in common use in Rome for enlarging the pupils of the eye; it is one of the commonest plants in Roman Britain. Neither the vine nor the fig, both common at Silchester, has yet been discovered at Caerwent.[1]

Just west of the termination of the long wall was a small pit, F 2. Nothing of any note was found in it. Bottom was reached at 8 feet 6 inches from grass level.

Another long boundary wall was discovered to the north of the pit. The wall turns north at its western end and connects up with the boundary walls of House

[1] The greater celandine still grows in profusion at Caerwent. Alexanders is an abundant plant on the "Roman" camp at Clifton.—H.

no. VII N. At the angle where the wall turns north a very irregular-shaped pit was found. The pit was probably used for digging gravel or sand. Nothing was found in it.

The annexed plan (fig. 9) shows the progress of the excavations down to the end of 1909.

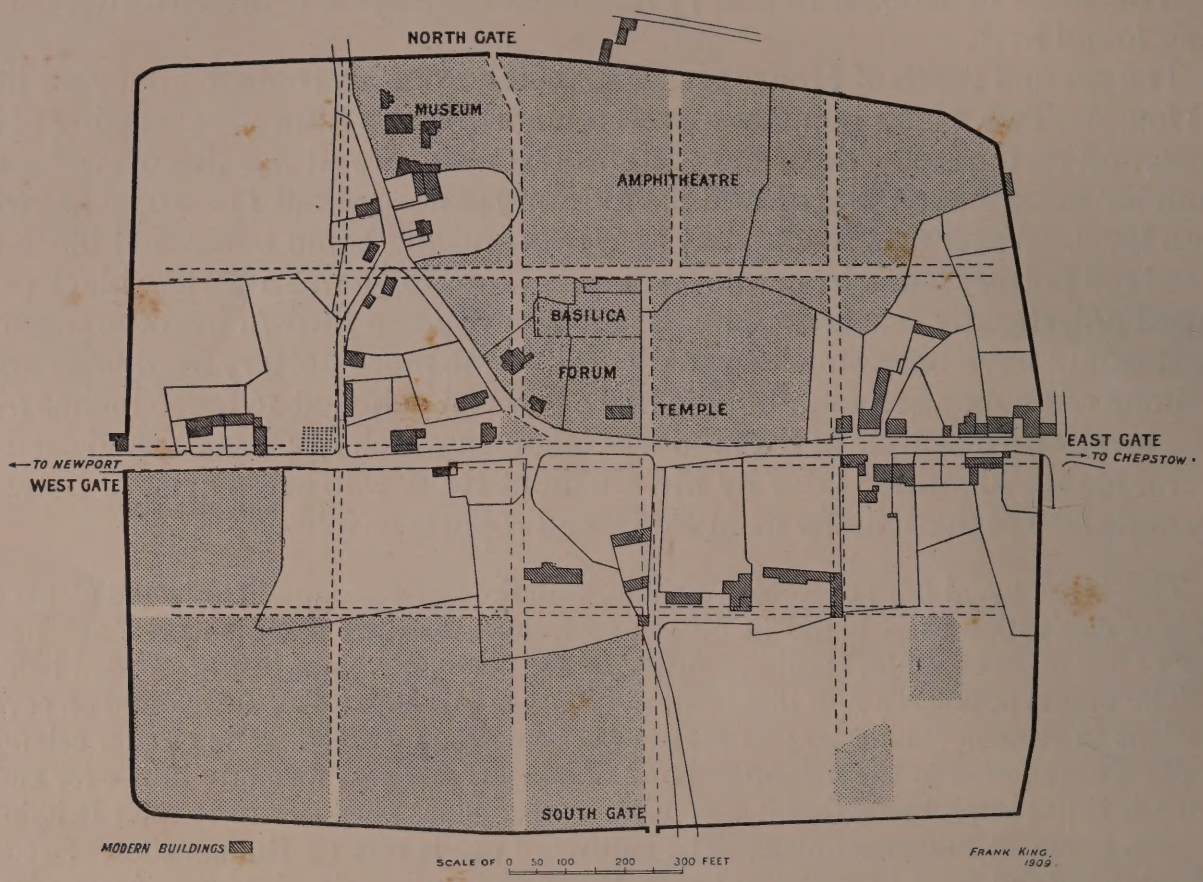


Fig. 9. Block-plan of Caerwent, showing the parts excavated down to the end of 1909.